CLAIMS

That which is claimed is:

1. A medical device comprising:

a support member;

a bioactive agent disposed on said support member; and,

an outer barrier disposed on said bioactive agent to prevent exposure of said bioactive agent to bodily fluid when said medical device is inserted into a blood vessel, said outer barrier exhibiting the characteristic of being substantially inert to bodily fluid but dissolving when exposed to an external agent.

2. A medical device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the bioactive agent takes the form of a coating applied to the support member.

3. A medical device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the bioactive agent is integral with the support member.

4. A medical device as defined in Claim 1, wherein the outer barrier takes the form of a coating applied to the bioactive agent.

5. A medical device as defined in Claim 2, wherein the outer barrier takes the form of a coating applied to the bioactive agent.

6. A medical device as defined in Claim 1, wherein said bioactive agent is comprised of polyglycolic acid and said outer barrier is comprised of ethylene vinyl alcohol.

7. A medical device as defined in Claim 6, wherein said external agent is comprised of dimethyl sulfoxide.

8. A medical device as defined in Claim 1, wherein said bioactive agent takes the form of a thrombus inducing coating.

9. A medical device as defined in Claim 2, wherein said bioactive agent takes the form of a thrombus inducing coating.

10. A medical device as defined in Claim 1, wherein said bioactive agent takes the form of a coating which induces the clotting of blood.

11. A medical device as defined in Claim 2, wherein said bioactive agent takes the form of a coating which induces the clotting of blood.

12. A medical device comprising:

a support member;

a bioactive agent disposed on said support member; and,

an outer barrier disposed on said bioactive agent to prevent exposure of said bioactive agent to bodily fluid when said medical device is inserted into a blood vessel, said outer barrier exhibiting the characteristic of being non-water soluble but dissolving when an external activating agent is applied to said outer barrier.

13. A medical device comprising:

a support member;

a bioactive agent disposed on said support member; and,

an outer barrier disposed on said bioactive agent to prevent contact between said bioactive agent and bodily fluid when said medical device is inserted into the body, said outer barrier exhibiting the characteristic of being substantially inert to blood but dissolving and exposing a portion of said bioactive agent when in the presence of a biological agent.

14. A medical device comprising:

a support member;

a bioactive agent disposed on said support member; and,

an outer barrier comprising an activatable agent, said outer barrier covering said bioactive agent and exhibiting the characteristics of substantially preventing a reaction between the bioactive agent and bodily fluid when said medical device is inserted into the body and permitting a reaction between the bioactive agent and bodily fluid upon activation by an external source.

15. A medical device comprising:

a bioactive support member which when placed within the body causes a reaction with bodily tissue; and,

a barrier for preventing a reaction between the bioactive support member and bodily tissue when said medical device is inserted into the body, said barrier exhibiting the characteristic of being non-water soluble but exposing the bioactive support member to bodily tissue when an activating agent is applied to said barrier.

16. A medical device comprising:

a support member which when placed within the body causes a reaction with bodily tissue; and,

a barrier for preventing a reaction between the support member and bodily fluid when said medical device is inserted into the body, said barrier exhibiting the characteristic of exposing a portion of said support member when in the presence of an external agent.

17. A method of treatment comprising the steps of:

providing a medical device comprising a support member, a bioactive agent disposed on said support member, and a barrier exhibiting the characteristic of normally preventing a reaction between the bioactive agent and a bodily fluid and of exposing a portion of said bioactive agent when an external agent is applied to said barrier;

inserting a delivery catheter into a blood vessel;

advancing the distal tip of the delivery catheter through the blood vessel until the distal tip is adjacent to a selected site within the blood vessel;

delivering said medical device with the delivery catheter at the selected site; and,

applying said external agent through the catheter and into the blood vessel to thereby activate said barrier to expose said bioactive agent to bodily tissue to thereby cause a reaction between the bioactive agent and the bodily tissue.

18. A method of treatment comprising the steps of:

providing a medical device comprising a support member having a bioactive surface which reacts with bodily tissue and having a barrier which exhibits the characteristic of normally inhibiting a reaction between said bioactive surface of said medical device and bodily tissue;

inserting a delivery catheter into a blood vessel;

advancing the distal tip of the delivery catheter through the blood vessel until the distal tip is adjacent a selected site within the blood vessel;

delivering said medical device with the delivery catheter at the selected site; and,

applying an external agent through the catheter to a selected site to thereby activate said barrier and thus expose said bioactive surface to bodily tissue to thereby cause a reaction between the bioactive surface and the bodily tissue.